

Message Text

SECRET

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64

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-07 INR-11 L-03 ACDA-19

NSAE-00 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 USIA-15 TRSE-00

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FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2735

INFO DOD WASHDC

AMEMBASSY BONN

USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

USCINCEUR

S E C R E T LONDON 09893

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR, MILL, PARM, UK, NATO

SUBJECT: BRITISH DEFENSE REVIEW

REF: USNATO 4119

1. FCO CONTACT HAS CONFIRMED THAT DRAFT DEFENSE REVIEW HAS BEEN UP TO MINISTERS FOR TWO BRIEF DISCUSSIONS, EACH TIME BEING REFERRED BACK TO THE "STEERING GROUP," CHAIRED BY SIR JOHN HUNT, FOR ADDITIONAL WORK. ALTHOUGH

DAY'S HALF-HOUR MINISTERIAL MEETING ON THE SUBJECT, HE SUSPECTS THE RATIONALE IS MUCH THE SAME AS THAT EXPRESSED DURING THE FIRST REVIEW SEVERAL WEEKS AGO: SAVINGS FROM EXTRA-NATO COSTS ARE INSUFFICIENT TO ATTAIN THE SAVINGS LABOR FEELS IT MUST HAVE ON POLITICAL GROUNDS, AND ALL BUDGETARY-ECONOMIC PROJECTIONS EMPLOYED ARE EXCESSIVELY VAGUE.

2. FCO SOURCE, WHO IS WELL PLACED AND REASONABLY KNOWLEDGEABLE ON THE TOPIC OPINED THAT, WITH OCTOBER ELECTION PROSPECT, CABINET HAS NO INTENTION OF TAKING DECISIONS

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ON POTENTIALLY DIVISIVE DEFENSE ISSUE BEFORE FACING

ELECTORATE AND THAT PATTERN OF INCONCLUSIVE MINISTERIAL
DISCUSSION/REVIEW OF THIS SUBJECT IS LIKELY TO BE RE-
PEATED FOR REMAINDER OF THE SUMMER. IN VIEW OF
PARLIAMENTARY RECESS AND ONSET OF TRADITIONAL AUGUST
HOLIDAY PERIOD (MAJORITY OF SENIOR FCO AND MOD PROFES-
SIONALS WORKING ON DEFENSE REVIEW EITHER ARE ON HOLIDAY
OR WILL BE DEPARTING SHORTLY), WE SUSPECT THIS HUNCH
MAY PROVE CORRECT.

SOHM

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NNN

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